

# A Study of Organizational Justice, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, and Student Achievement in High Schools

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## Abstract

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*Emerging research suggests that teachers' perceptions of fairness with respect to interactions with school administrators, decision-making processes, and decision outcomes can contribute greatly to understanding effective schools. This study of Virginia public high schools used correlational analysis to measure the strength of the relationships between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and their effects on student achievement. A positive and significant relationship was found between organizational justice and OCB in these high schools. No significant correlation was found between organizational justice and student achievement, although relationships were found between OCB and some particular measures of achievement. Findings are discussed in terms of their implications for future research on organizational justice.*

**Keywords:** Organizational citizenship behavior; Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Schools Scale; organizational justice; Organizational Justice Scale; Virginia.

The perceptions of individual workers are critical to achieving an organization's intended goals and objectives (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Pulakos et al., 1988). When employees have positive attitudes about their interactions with supervisors and about decision-making processes, they are more apt to exhibit behaviors that result in greater organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

School employees are no exception to the rule. Perceptions about principals and the decision-making processes that direct the flow of resources and outcomes at a school affect the manner in which teachers affiliate with colleagues, engage students, communicate with families, and perform contractual and non-contractual duties. Teachers' perceptions are, therefore, fundamental to understanding the contextual factors in schools that promote or curb efforts to promote student achievement. The focus of this study is to determine if teacher perceptions of organizational justice were related to organizational citizenship behavior and student achievement in this sample of high schools.

## **Organizational Justice**

Organizational justice is a construct used by social and educational researchers to determine whether or not employees perceive supervisors as fair, respectful, and equitable (Greenberg, 1990). As a socio-emotional variable, it has been linked to organizational effectiveness (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 1990). Research on organizational justice tends to focus on how employees socially construct meaning from situations related to fairness (Chory & Kingsley-Westerman, 2009; Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Titrek, 2010). Perceptions of justice may be based on the distribution of organizational outcomes, procedures regulating outcome distribution, and interactions related to supervisor treatment of employees. Employees who perceive incongruence between their efforts and the recognition they receive for their efforts may be more likely to hold a skeptical or cynical view of organizational justice.

In the context of schools, organizational justice may be defined as teacher perceptions of fairness related to interactions with school leaders. Because they are responsible for creating climates of justice it is critical that school principals understand the implications of teacher perceptions of fairness. Examples of justice in schools may include school leaders celebrating individual and group successes, allowing teachers a voice in decision-making processes, taking responsibility for mistakes and correcting them, applying rules and practices consistently, and basing decisions on data rather than rumor and innuendo (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

## **Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Organizational citizenship behavior may be defined as "worker performance that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p.4). Organizational citizenship behaviors in schools are critical to understanding interactions between principals and teachers. More importantly those behaviors have consistently been found to correlate with student performance and/or academic

achievement (DiPaola & Hoy, 2005a; DiPaola & Hoy, 2005b; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Research by Hoy and DiPaola (2005a; 2005b) supported the linkage between organizational citizenship behavior and student achievement in elementary, middle, and high schools. Examples of organizational citizenship behaviors in schools include volunteering to serve on a school improvement committee, making innovative suggestions for improving the overall quality of the school, providing advance notice prior to taking personal leave, and giving up planning time or staying after school hours to tutor students.

Researchers have explored multiple dimensions of citizenship behavior. Williams (1988), for example, argued that organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) consisted of two dimensions, benefits to the individual and benefits to the organization. Organ (1990) asserted, however, that OCB was a five-dimensional construct (i.e. altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue). DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001) argued that defining and measuring behavioral dimensions are critical to understanding citizenship behavior in schools, and they were the first to examine organizational citizenship behavior in the context of schools. Through factor analysis, they demonstrated that organizational citizenship behavior is a one-dimensional construct when applied to the school setting: behaviors that benefit individual colleagues and students and those that benefit the school both enhance the organization's goals (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001). More succinctly, in the professional context of school organizations, a benefit to the individual is a benefit to the organization and vice-versa. OCB is, therefore, a singular "bipolar construct" when associated with schools (DiPaola, Tarter, & Hoy, 2005).

### Statement of Problem

As expectations and complexities for school leaders increase, they are compelled to foster cultures where educators use professional discretion to go beyond minimum expected performance (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Performing the tasks mandated in a job description is simply not enough to improve rigor and student achievement. Research suggests that workers' job satisfaction correlates with their perceptions of justice in decisions that are made and in the process for making them (Chen et al., 2010; Clay-Warner, Reynolds, & Roman, 2005; Schappe, 1998). Satisfaction is also related to organizational climate (Guy, 2007), employee dissent (Kassing & McDowell, 2008), organizational commitment (Liao & Rupp, 2005; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2009), organizational trust (Guy, 2007; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Hubbell & Chory-Assad, 2005), and organizational citizenship behavior (Farh, Earley, & Lin, 1997; Moorman, 1991; Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998; Organ & Moorman, 1993). Either independently, or in the

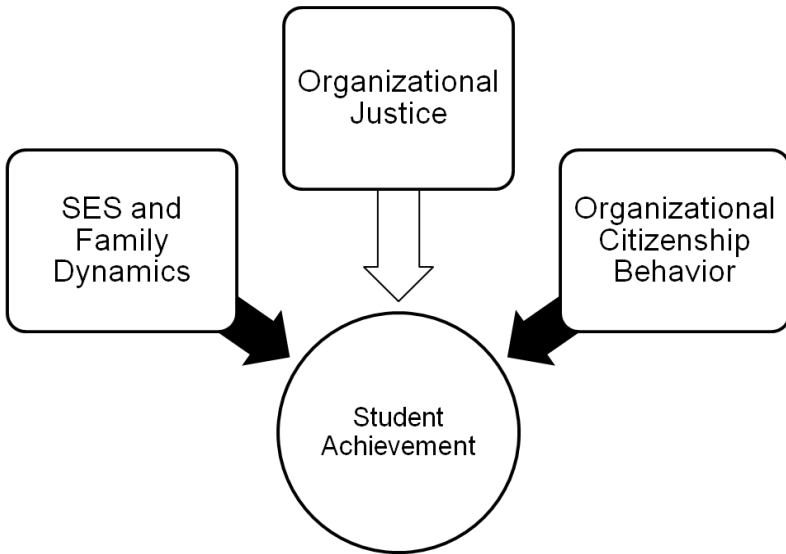
aggregate, these variables can advance or obstruct progress in organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

The relationship between organizational justice and school effectiveness is still emerging, and its specific relationship to student achievement is largely unknown (DiPaola & Guy, 2009). Because of the limited research on the effects of organizational justice in schools there is significant potential for extending scholarly discussion in a direction that ultimately benefits the field of educational leadership.

## Conceptual Framework

Empirical studies on justice, trust, and organizational citizenship behavior suggest that perceptions of fairness in school settings may play a positive role in promoting student achievement. The conceptual framework for this study posits a link between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior in the school setting, and highlights their association with student achievement. Prior studies on justice suggest a strong correlation to trust (DiPaola & Guy, 2009; Hoy & Tarter, 2004). Through empirical analysis, DiPaola and Guy (2009) determined that organizational justice correlates strongly and positively to school climate and trust. An earlier study by Tschannen-Moran (2003) also found a significant positive relationship between trust and organizational citizenship behavior. Hoy and Tarter (2004) concluded that justice and trust in schools are inextricably linked, operating in tandem to shape and influence the social milieu of a given school. Expanding on that work, DiPaola and Guy (2009) concluded that trust and justice are essentially different words for the same construct when applied to schools.

The findings of Hoy and Tarter (2004), Tschannen-Moran (2003), and DiPaola and Guy (2009) provide a clear rationale for exploring relationships among teacher perceptions of justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and student achievement, but no previous research has done so. This study provides a “first-look” analysis of the interplay among these variables. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework used for understanding the existing and hypothesized relationships between organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and student achievement.



↔ Hypothesized Relationships

➡ Evidence of Existing Relationships

Figure 1. Conceptual framework diagram for relationship between organizational justice and student achievement.

## Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study of the relationships among organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and student achievement in public high schools:

1. What is the relationship between organizational justice, as measured by the Organizational Justice Scale (OJS) and student achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) End-of-Course (EOC) Tests: English 11: *Reading*; English 11: *Writing*; Biology; and United States History?
2. What is the relationship between organizational justice, as measured by the Organizational Justice Scale (OJS) and organizational citizenship behaviors of classroom teachers, as measured by the Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale (OCBS) in Virginia high schools?

3. What are the relative and collective effects of organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and socio-economic status in explaining variance in student achievement with respect to effect size as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) End-of-Course (EOC) Tests: English 11: *Reading*; English 11: *Writing*; Biology; and United States History?

## Methodology

### Sample

District superintendents and high school principals across Virginia were contacted via electronic mail soliciting participation in an effort to obtain a representative sample of full-time teachers from high schools in the state. Participation in the study was voluntary. The sample consisted of 34 Virginia high schools. Thirty-two of them served students in grades nine through 12, and the other two served grades eight through 12. The mean student population of the 34 sampled schools was 1019. The largest school had a student population of 2083, and the smallest school had a population of 259. Table 1 compares the overall student population of Virginia high schools by subgroups to the schools in this study (N=34) by subgroups, including the proportion of economically disadvantaged students.

**Table 1**

Student Population of Sample Schools (N=34) and Virginia Public High Schools

Student Population	Sample (N=34)		Virginia	
	<i>Totals and Percent</i>		<i>Totals and Percent</i>	
Economically Disadvantaged	8,496	24.52%	110,898	29.22%
American Indian	80	<1%	1,304	<1%
Asian	1,072	3.09%	21,741	5.73%
Black	7,125	30.57%	92,768	24.45%
Hawaiian		42	<1%	486
Hispanic	2,082	6.01%	37,724	9.94%
White	23,232	67.07%	212,307	55.95%
2 or more	968	2.79%	3,121	3.46%

Virginia Department of Education. (2011). *Fall membership 2010-2011*.

## Measures

Two instruments were used to assess aggregate teacher perceptions of justice and organizational citizenship behavior. The Organizational Justice Scale (OJS) incorporates the fundamental principles of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice within school organizations (See Appendix A). The 10-item Likert-type scale was used to measure the extent to which teacher respondents disagreed or agreed with statements related to school-level perceptions of fairness. Sample items on the OJS include the following:

“Students in this school are treated fairly.”

“The principal does not play favorites.”

“Educators in this school follow courses of action that are generally free of self-interest.”

The OJS was tested in a pilot study of 75 middle schools in Ohio (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). The alpha coefficient of reliability for the OJS was a relatively high .97. Construct validity was supported by factor analysis of the individual scale items (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

This study also used the revised Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Schools Scale (OCBS), which specifically measures teacher perceptions of organizational citizenship behavior (See Appendix B). The OCBS is a 12-item Likert-type scale that asks participants the degree to which they agree or disagree with individual statements such as the following:

“Teachers help students on their own time.”

“Teachers voluntarily help new teachers.”

“Teachers volunteer to serve on new committees.”

The construct validity of the OCBS has been consistently supported through confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis (DiPaola & Hoy, 2005a; DiPaola & Hoy, 2005b; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001)

## Student Achievement Measures

Student achievement in the Commonwealth of Virginia is measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. This study used the SOL assessments to examine the relationships among organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and student achievement. The SOL assessments are administered annually and designed to measure the degree to which students have mastered content and skills identified in the Virginia SOL Curriculum Frameworks. The SOL assessments are considered valid and reliable measures of student achievement as confirmed by a Virginia

Department of Education Content Review Committee (Hambleton et. al, 2000). Accreditation ratings for individual schools are based on the SOL assessments and determined by student performance in the aggregate.

Achievement data for this study were limited to four Virginia SOL assessments: Biology; U. S. History; English 11: Reading; and English 11: Writing. Wagner (2008) recognized these particular assessments for their content variety and consistency in terms of being administered to students attending public high schools across Virginia under uniform conditions. Specifically, the study used the mean scaled SOL scores as the identified end-of-course assessments for the academic year. Standard scores for the SOL assessments range between 200 and 600. A student must obtain a 400 to meet minimum proficiency standards. A score of 500 or better is considered "pass advanced." The SOL assessment data for participating schools were collected from the Office of Test Administration, Scoring, and Reporting of the Virginia Department of Education.

### **Socioeconomic Measures**

Socioeconomic factors play a significant role in student achievement. In order to provide a more accurate reflection of the relationship between organizational justice and student achievement, this study controlled for socioeconomic status. The percentage of students receiving free and/or reduced-price lunch served as a proxy for socioeconomic status. Data on free and/or reduced-price lunch percentages for each of the participating high schools in the sample (N=34) were obtained from the Virginia Department of Education.

### **Procedures**

Surveys were administered to teachers during regularly scheduled faculty meetings at high schools throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Organizational Justice Scale was administered to one-half of all full-time teacher respondents in each participating school. The remaining full-time teacher respondents were given the Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale. An identifying number was assigned to the survey instruments to link individual participants with their respective schools. The identifying number allowed for school -level analysis of the relationships between organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and student achievement. Student-level data related to student achievement and socioeconomic status were obtained from an online database maintained by the Virginia Department of Education. Scaled school-level student achievement scores were obtained by the Virginia Department of Education.

This study used correlations and multiple regression analyses to address the research questions. Data on organizational justice, organizational citi-



zenship, and student achievement were aggregated at the school level. Standard deviation and mean/median scores were calculated for organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Pearson  $r$  correlations were used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Multiple regression analyses were used to identify the relative impact of organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and socio-economic status on student achievement.

## Findings

Descriptive statistics were computed for organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and student achievement in English 11: *Reading*; English 11: *Writing*; Biology; and United States History. Mean scores for organizational justice were determined by averaging the scores for the 10 justice items. Organizational citizenship behavior was determined by averaging the scores for all 12 citizenship items.

Reliabilities for the OJS and OCBS were determined using Cronbach's alpha for evaluating internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha for the OJS stood at .96, which indicates high internal consistency with respect to reliability. The Cronbach's alpha for OCBS was .89, also indicative of high internal consistency.

Mean school scores on four Virginia Standards of Learning end-of-course tests were obtained from the Virginia Department of Education for the 2010-2011 academic year: English 11: *Reading*; English 11: *Writing*; Biology; and United States History. Student mastery on the SOL end-of-course tests was measured on a scale of 200 to 600 with 400 representing the minimum level of proficiency. A score of 500 or above represented advanced proficiency. Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for each of the variables studied: organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, student achievement, and socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is reported as the percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch (see Table 2).

**Table 2***Descriptive statistics (N=34)*

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Organizational Justice	4.42	.54	2.90	5.30
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	4.47	.25	4.01	5.13
English 11: Reading SOL	494.76	20.44	462.0	530.0
English 11: Writing SOL	487.10	20.71	451.0	518.0
Biology SOL	456.44	17.04	423.0	492.0
United States History SOL	442.26	18.11	401.0	474.0
Free and Reduced Lunch (in Percent)	31.09	19.09	06.00	76.00

### Organizational Justice and Student Achievement

Results of the bivariate correlation analysis (see Table 3) indicate that, in this sample of schools, there is no significant correlation between organizational justice and student achievement for English 11: *Reading* ( $r = .24$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ); English 11: *Writing* ( $r = .22$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ); Biology ( $r = .23$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ); and United States History ( $r = .03$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ )

**Table 3***Correlational Analysis of Organizational Justice and Student Achievement*

	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Organizational Justice	.24	.22	.23	.03	-.09
2. English 11: <i>Reading</i> SOL		.92**	.85**	.90**	-.78**
3. English 11: <i>Writing</i> SOL			.80**	.83**	-.79**
4. Biology SOL				.77**	-.67**
5. United States History SOL					-.72**
6. SES					

\*\* $p < .01$ \* $p < .05$ 

Although organizational justice did not correlate to student achievement, all four measures of student achievement were highly correlated with one another. Additionally, significant inverse relationships were confirmed

between student socioeconomic status and all four measures of student achievement. The proportion of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch was unrelated to organizational justice in this sample of high schools ( $r = -.09$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ).

### Organizational Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The correlation analysis revealed a strong, positive correlation between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior in schools ( $r = .60$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These findings suggest a robust possibility of observing extra-role performance on the part of classroom teachers in schools that foster a culture of justice. Because there is no direct correlation between organizational justice and student achievement, this finding suggests that organizational justice may have an indirect relationship to student achievement. It may bolster organizational citizenship behavior directly and, therefore, student achievement indirectly.

### Relative and Collective Effects of Examined Variables on Student Achievement

Through multiple regression analysis, the relative and collective effects of the explanatory variables were explored. The analysis revealed that socioeconomic status in relation to organizational justice and citizenship behavior had a significant and negative independent effect on the mean scores for all four of the student achievement tests: English 11: *Reading* ( $\beta = -.70$ ,  $p < .01$ ); English 11: *Writing* ( $\beta = -.74$ ,  $p < .01$ ); Biology ( $\beta = -.57$ ,  $p < .01$ ); and United States History ( $\beta = -.66$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The negative  $\beta$  values for socioeconomic status demonstrate an inverse relationship between students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch and student achievement. Schools in this study with higher proportions of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch experienced lower levels of student achievement.

Data indicate that organizational justice did little to account for the variance in mean student achievement scores and does not serve as a predictor of student achievement when factoring for student socioeconomic status: English 11: *Reading* ( $\beta = .03$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ); English 11: *Writing* ( $\beta = .04$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ); Biology ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ); and United States History ( $\beta = -.21$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ).

On the other hand, organizational citizenship behavior continued to have a significant effect on mean school achievement scores for Biology ( $\beta = .52$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for student socioeconomic status. In fact, organizational citizenship behavior by itself accounted for 34% of the variance in mean Biology scores for the sample ( $N=34$ ). Organizational citizenship behavior also demonstrated significant secondary predictability for Reading ( $\beta = .34$ ,  $p < .05$ ), explaining 24% of the variance. Multiple regression analysis demonstrated little to no significant independent effect of

organizational citizenship behavior on Writing ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ) and U. S. History ( $\beta = .29$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ) when controlling for socioeconomic status.

The strength of the relationships between all three variables, organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, and student socioeconomic status, and student achievement in relation to the individual student achievement measures was especially noteworthy. Collectively, the independent variables accounted for 70% of the variance in *Reading*, 66% in *Writing*, 64% in *Biology*, and 56% in *U. S. History*. Table 4 contains the multiple regression data for organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior, student socioeconomic status, and student achievement.

**Table 4**

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses for Organizational Justice (OJ), Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), and Student SES in Predicting Student Achievement (N=34)*

Dependent Variable and Predictors	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SE
English: <i>Reading</i> SOL Test		.70	.68	11.66
SES	-.70**			
Organizational Justice	-.03			
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	.34*			
English: <i>Writing</i> SOL Test		.66	.63	12.64
SES	-.74**			
Organizational Justice	.04			
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	.19			
Biology SOL Test		.65	.61	10.62
SES	-.57**			
Organizational Justice	-.14			
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	.52**			
US History SOL Test		.56	.51	12.65
SES	-.66**			
Organizational Justice	-.21			
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	.29			

\*\* $p < .01$

\* $p < .05$

## Additional Findings

Data from the correlational analysis indicated that organizational citizenship behavior was significantly related to student achievement in both Biology and Reading ( $r = .57$ ,  $p < .01$ , and  $r = .48$ ,  $p < .01$ , respectively). Organizational citizenship behavior also was significantly related to Writing ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .05$ ), with a moderate positive correlation. The relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and United States History ( $r = .32$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ) was statistically insignificant. The proportion of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch was slightly inversely correlated to organizational citizenship behavior ( $r = -.23$ ,  $p > .05$ ) (See Table 5).

**Table 5**

*Correlational Analysis of Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Student Achievement*

	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Organizational Citizenship Behavior	.48**	.39*	.57**	.32	-.23
2. English 11: <i>Reading</i> SOL		.92**	.85**	.90**	-.78**
3. English 11: <i>Writing</i> SOL			.80**	.83**	-.79**
4. Biology SOL				.77**	-.67**
5. United States History SOL					-.72**
6. SES					

\*\* $p < .01$

\* $p < .05$

## Discussion

This study found a significant relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. There was no evidence of a direct correlation between organizational justice and the mean student achievement scores in English 11: *Reading*, English 11: *Writing*, Biology, and United States History. Organizational citizenship behavior was positively and significantly correlated to mean student achievement scores in Biology and English 11: *Reading*, and English 11: *Writing*.

A school's socioeconomic status was found to have a strong significant inverse relationship to all measures of student achievement in this study. The findings of this study suggest that organizational justice may bolster the level of organizational citizenship behavior, which had a significant correlation to some of the student achievement measures used in the study. Collectively, the explanatory variables were responsible for a high percentage of the variance on all four measures of student achievement. The results of this study add to the growing realization that organizational justice is significantly re-

lated to organizational citizenship behavior and organizational citizenship behavior has a positive effect on student achievement.

The first analysis investigated the relationship between organizational justice and student achievement as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) End-of-Course (EOC) Tests: English 11: *Reading*; English 11: *Writing*; Biology; and United States History. Data revealed no direct relationship between organizational justice and student achievement. To our knowledge, this is the first study of these variables at the high school level. Previous literature has suggested that justice is a proxy for trust (DiPaola & Guy, 2009; Hoy & Tarter, 2004), and empirical analysis supports a direct correlation between trust and student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). Empirical analysis has also supported a direct correlation between trust and organizational citizenship behavior (Tschannen-Moran, 2003) and between organizational citizenship behavior and student achievement (DiPaola & Hoy, 2005a; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran 2001).

Given the links between trust and justice, trust and student achievement, trust and organizational citizenship behavior, and organizational citizenship behavior and student achievement, we expected that justice would also be directly correlated to student achievement. The findings failed to support this expectation. They did, however, confirm a link between organizational citizenship behavior and student achievement. This study suggests a need for further research into the degree to which organizational justice may influence student achievement.

This study also found a significant relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational justice describes teacher perceptions of fairness regarding the appropriateness of outcomes and processes in the school. Organizational justice reflects teacher perceptions of the *principal's* behavior as opposed to organizational citizenship behavior, which concerns teachers' perceptions of *teacher* behaviors.

Justice provides coherence between teacher citizenship behaviors and other contextual factors shaping student performance outcomes. We can only speculate as to why organizational justice was not significantly related to student achievement in this study. In general, the organizational justice construct is a reflection of faculty perceptions of the principal. Teachers may not perceive school principals as having direct influence on student performance outcomes. The working day of a principal is typically consumed with governance and managerial tasks such as school discipline, attending meetings, preparing reports, supervising personnel, maintaining the facilities, ensuring compliance with policy and legal mandates, and managing budgets.

Although classroom teachers may perceive their principals as having little to no direct impact on student achievement, they may view themselves and their teaching colleagues as having a greater degree of influence. Regardless, organizational justice should be a consideration in all aspects of the social milieu of a school.

It is also important to consider the rationale that guided our research questions and our predictions concerning the relationship between organizational justice and student achievement. Through correlational analysis Tschannen-Moran (2004) determined that faculty trust in the principal was unrelated to student achievement. Although Hoy and Tarter (2004) determined that justice was a proxy for trust, they determined that faculty trust in the principal was a greater predictor of justice than faculty trust in colleagues. Both studies explored teacher perceptions of the principal's interactions with faculty.

Coupled with the findings of this study, the work of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy and Tarter suggests that organizational justice may only be directly related to a singular facet of trust, faculty trust in the principal. Therefore, organizational justice may not be a proxy for the entire trust construct. However, this study did not explore trust and its relationship to the examined variables. These assumptions merely underscore the need for further research with respect to determining the nature of the relationship between student achievement and two seemingly distinct, yet interconnected constructs: organizational justice and trust.

Finally, this study investigated the relative effects of student socioeconomic status and organizational justice perceptions of teachers on student achievement as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) End-of-Course (EOC) Tests: English 11: *Reading*; English 11: *Writing*; Biology; and United States History. On all four student-performance indicators, student socioeconomic status was found to have a significant independent negative effect on student achievement. Schools with higher proportions of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch experienced lower levels of student achievement in *Reading*, *Writing*, Biology, and History. These results support prior findings on the relationship between student socioeconomic status and student achievement (Jackson, 2009; Jurewicz, 2004; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte, 2001; Wagner, 2008). Further research is needed to determine the effects of student socioeconomic status on organizational citizenship behavior.

### Implications for Practice

The importance of school principals in leading and managing school improvement efforts has long been recognized. School principals may influence learning outcomes by shaping and fostering a school culture that promotes a sense of fairness. This occurs through the principal's interactions with teachers, application and enforcement of policies and procedures, and through the development of school processes that support teacher task performance.

Our findings indicate that school principals and decision-making structures must be perceived as fair, respectful, and equitable by classroom teachers. Organizational justice is a motivational factor that may help explain organizational citizenship behavior or the degree to which teachers perform

non-contractual duties and/or responsibilities. More specifically, perceptions of fairness may encourage teachers to exceed contractual expectations in lieu of tangible rewards such as promotions, bonuses, and/or raises.

Principals may promote justice perceptions in their respective schools by being equitable in celebrating individual and group successes, taking responsibility for mistakes and correcting them, basing decisions on data as opposed to rumor and innuendo, and exhibiting trustworthiness and impartiality when interacting with staff (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

Perceptions of injustice can lead to counterproductive work behaviors such as arriving to work late, leaving work early, spreading rumors, and blaming others. Such behaviors limit the principal's ability to focus on other essential duties that support teacher task performance. More importantly, counterproductive work behaviors can jeopardize collective efforts aimed at promoting student achievement. Principals do their students and schools a great service by developing and sustaining a school climate that places organizational justice at the forefront of interactions with teachers. To bolster levels of organizational justice in schools Hoy and Tarter (2004) suggested the following principal behaviors:

- Be equitable when celebrating individual and group successes.
- Strive for fairness in the assignment of duties, such as lunch or bus duty.
- Allow teachers to have a voice in decision-making processes.
- Give teachers opportunities to express respectful disagreement with decisions.
- Be sensitive to the needs of teachers when communicating bad or negative information.
- Be consistent, but allow flexibility when applying procedures and rules.
- Ensure that self-interest is subordinate to the mission, goals, and objectives of the school.
- Take responsibility for mistakes and correct them.
- Base decisions on data, rather than rumor and innuendo.
- Actively seek staff members' opinions.
- Be benevolent, honest, open, sincere, trustworthy, and impartial in all actions.

These behaviors focus on the aggregate well-being of classroom teachers, as opposed to the singular objectives or desires of a school principal. They are rather small sacrifices that principals should be willing to make to support teacher task performance.



### Suggestions for Further Research

As with all social science research, this study is not meant to be conclusive. Important questions concerning teacher perceptions of fairness remain to be addressed. First and foremost, additional research is needed to confirm organizational justice as a contextual factor affecting organizational citizenship behavior and student achievement. Examining the direct, mediating, and moderating effects of organizational justice on student achievement will yield further clues about some of the assumptions made by this study. An important assumption of this study is that justice bolsters organizational citizenship behavior. Future research should seek to determine whether or not this assumption is supported by empirical evidence.

Second, further research may improve the generalizability of these findings. This study was limited to 34 high schools in Virginia. Therefore, the results may neither be generalized to all high school in Virginia nor high schools in the United States. Replication with the methodology in elementary and middle school organizations is still needed to assess the generalizability of the association between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior and possible mediating effects of organizational justice on student achievement.

Finally, an enhanced understanding of the antecedents and consequences of organizational justice is needed in order to understand the broader social context of school organizations. Further research may assess the causal effects of teacher assignments, teacher gender, teacher ethnicity, and teacher credentials on organizational justice perceptions. Future studies may also explore the consequences of organizational justice with respect to teacher turnover, academic optimism, job satisfaction, principal support, employee dissent, and lateness behavior.

### Conclusion

Teacher perceptions of fairness are defined by interactions with the principal. As facilitators of change in their respective schools, principals are singularly responsible for school-wide efforts aimed at promoting and sustaining high-levels of student performance. Thus, it is imperative that principals form positive relationships with teachers. If teachers perceive the principal and/or decision-making structures as being unfair, aggregate citizenship behavior may likely diminish. In turn, student achievement as measured by standardized performance measures may wane.

This study clearly underscores the interconnectedness of justice and organizational citizenship behavior and the implications of developing and fostering a culture of justice in schools. School leaders who ignore the implications of developing and sustaining a culture of justice do so at their own peril.

## Appendix A

### OJS

DIRECTIONS: The following statements are about your school. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements along a scale from STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) to STRONGLY AGREE (6).

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. The principal's behavior is consistent .....  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 2. Students in this school are treated fairly .....  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 3. The principal does not play favorites .....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 4. The principal treats everyone with respect and dignity .....  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 5. There is no preferential treatment in this school .....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 6. The principal in this school is fair to everyone .....  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 7. Educators in this school follow courses of action that are<br>generally free of self interest. .... | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 8. The principal adheres to high ethical standards .....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 9. Teachers are involved in decisions that affect them .....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 10. Teachers are treated fairly in this school .....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
- (Hoy & Tarter, 2004)

## Appendix B

### OCB-Scale

Indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements about your School from STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) to STRONGLY AGREE (6). :

- |   | Strongly<br>Disagree | Strongly<br>Agree |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Teachers help students on their own time .....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 2. Teachers waste a lot of class time .....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 3. Teachers voluntarily help new teachers .....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 4. Teachers volunteer to serve on new committees.....   | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 5. Teachers volunteer to sponsor extra curricular activities.....                               | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 6. Teachers arrive to work and meetings on time.....  | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 7. Teachers take the initiative to introduce themselves to<br>substitutes and assist them ..... | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 8. Teachers begin class promptly and use class time effectively....                             | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 9. Teachers give colleagues advanced notice of changes in<br>schedule or routine.....           | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 10. Teachers give an excessive amount of busy work .....  | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 11. Teacher committees in this school work productively .....                                   | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
| 12. Teachers make innovative suggestions to improve the<br>overall quality of our school .....  | 1 2 3 4 5 6          |                   |
- (DiPaola & Hoy, 2004)

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